Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

National Institute of
Environmental Health Sciences

Monitoring health effects of wildfires using the biosense system--San Diego County, California, October 2007

Abstract:

During October 21-26, 2007, wildfires consumed hundreds of thousands of acres and forced the evacuation of more than 300,000 persons in San Diego County, California. During large-scale emergencies, data are needed to assess health effects, plan response, and evaluate response adequacy. This report describes some of the health effects of the wildfires based on data from the CDC BioSense system, which receives emergency department (ED) patient chief complaint information and physician diagnosis codes from six hospitals in San Diego County. Analysis of these data indicated that ED visits for respiratory disease, especially those associated with dyspnea and asthma, increased during a 5-day fire period compared with the preceding 20 weekdays. For the six hospitals combined, visits for dyspnea increased from 48.6 to 72.6 per day, and visits with diagnoses of asthma increased from 21.7 to 40.4 per day. Local, state, and federal public health personnel should continue collaborative efforts to expand and

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Resource Description

Exposure : ☒

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

 Extreme Weather Event

   Extreme Weather Event: Wildfires

Geographic Feature: ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

 None or Unspecified

Geographic Location: ☒

resource focuses on specific location

 United States

Health Impact: ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Respiratory Effect

Respiratory Effect: Asthma, Bronchitis/Pneumonia, Other Respiratory Effect

Respiratory Condition (other) : respiratory emergency department visits

Resource Type: ⊠

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale: ⊠

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified